[Translation]

Load Capacity of NH-8

2415. SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the number of vehicles plying daily on the National Highway No. 8 on Delhi-Jaipur-Ajmer-Udaipur-Ahmedabad route is more than its load bearing capacity;

(b) if so, the ratio between the vehicles and the load bearing capacity of the above National Highway; and

(c) the measures being taken by the Government to remove the imbalance in the above ratio?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b) No such ratio exists between the vehicles and the road bearing capacity of the National Highway. However, the pavement design is based on allowable axle load, repetitions thereof, condition of soil, rainfall, etc. For NH 8, some sections have been accordingly strengthened and some have yet to be attended to.

(c) Strengthening and widening of this road is included in the IXth Plan.

[English]

Indo-Bhutan River Project

2416. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been invited to the newsitem captioned "Indo-Bhutan river project may spell doom for North Bengal" appearing in the 'Week-end Observer of Business and Politics', New Delhi dated February 8, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein, as per his Ministry's information;

(c) his reaction thereto; and

(d) the stage at which the Sankosh Project stands at present and whether its environmental impact assessment study has since been completed and if so, its outcome?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The detailed Project Report prepared by the Central Water Commission envisages construction of dams across the river Sankosh for generation of 4060 MW of Power. The regulated discharge is also proposed for irrigation and other purposes in Bihar and West Bengal territory. Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) studies have been carried out by Water and Power Consultancy Services (WAPCOS) and final Report on EIA studies is under examination by the Central Water Commission. Ministry of Environment and Forest would be approached for further examination before seeking investment clearance for the canal component of the project which lies in the Indian Territory.

Nuclear Free Zone

2417. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a resolution for creating a Nuclear Free Zone in South Asia was adopted in the first meeting of UN General Assembly in December, 1996 with 130 members supporting and only three opposing it; and

(b) if so, the precise content of the resolution, and stand taken in this regard by India, Pakistan and other nations in the region?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. On 11th November, 1996 the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution titled "Establishment of a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in South Asia" by 130 votes in favour with 3 votes against and 8 abstentions. The resolution was introduced by Pakistan and co-sponsored by Bangladesh. Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives voted in favour of the resolution, India and Bhutan voted against the resolution. In its explanation of vote, India stated that it does not regard South Asia as a region or zone for purpose of disarmament and security given the fact that its strategic and political interests and concerns extend beyond its immediate geographical neighbours, India also said that this resolution does not meet the UN endorsed requirement that establishment of NWFZs should be based on an appropriate definition of the region, taking into account the specific characteristics of the region and the full range of security concerns of the States of the region. Such zones must be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States concerned.

Nehru Yuvak Kendras in Gujarat

2418. SHRI SANAT MEHTA : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether a number of Nehru Yuvak Kendras are functioning in Gujarat at present;

(b) if so, the details thereof, location-wise;

(c) whether more Nehru Yuvak Kendras are planned in the State;

(d) if so, the details thereof, district-wise; and

(e) the average expenditure incurred on each Kendra?